



Statement from the Government of the United Kingdom

Delivered by Stephen O'Brien, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development

Thank you Chair. I am delighted to be here at today's event, with colleagues from developing countries, the private sector, donor countries, foundations and multilaterals.

Commitment, dedication and effort will be required from all of us, if we are to meet the challenge ahead.

Today 67 million children remain out of school, over half of whom are girls, over 40% of whom live in conflict-affected states, and many of whom are from the poorest and most marginalised communities. This is unacceptable.

Education is essential for good development. It saves the lives of mothers and children. Half the progress made on under-5 mortality over the past 40 years can be attributed to better education of women.

Education reduces poverty and it boosts growth.

But there is no point having children in school unless they are learning. Quality education is critical to economic growth.

We need a revolution in quality not just access. The average child in a poor

country is at the level of attainment equivalent to a child in the bottom 5 per cent of a developed country.

This is why the UK is committed to supporting education, and the Global Partnership for Education

Through our bilateral programmes, the British Government will support 9 million children in primary school and 2 million in secondary school in the period 2011-2015

We will deliver on girls' education, fragile states and learning outcomes:

- through our Girls Education Challenge, which will reach up to one million additional girls, targeting the most marginalised.
- through our bilateral programme, which will measure the proportion of children reading with fluency at early grades of primary school.
- and we will spend around half of our direct education aid in fragile and conflict affected states.

We will also continue to support the Global Partnership for Education. I am delighted to confirm that commitments from others have now reached the level needed to release £70 million for GPE from the UK's leverage fund.

In addition to this pre-existing commitment to GPE, I can today announce a new pledge of £50 million per year, from 2012-14: £150 million in total – enough to support 2.4 million children to enrol in primary school.

However this commitment is dependent on results and value for money. We will maintain a relentless focus on delivery. In 2013, the British Government will

review our level of commitment to the Partnership Fund. I want to be very clear – if performance has not been good enough, our commitment will be reduced.

But if GPE is delivering, we will maintain our commitment or even increase it. Our priority must be to ensure this money is spent in the best way to achieve our goal – a better education for the world's children